

Gervais Elam House

"Vaucluse"

Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Newport County

HABS No. 16

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey

Philip D. Creer, District Officer

14 College Street, Providence, R. I.

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GERVAIS ELAM HOUSE  
Wapping Road  
MIDDLETOWN, RHODE ISLAND

Owner: Thomas P. Hazard, President, Rhode Island Estates Corporation, Peace-dale, R. I.

Date of Erection: 1784---Rebuilt 1803-4

Architect: Unknown

Builder: Gervais Elam

Present Condition: Very bad

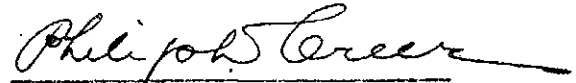
Number of Stories: 2½

Materials of Construction: This is a 2½ story clapboarded structure with minor wings, with brick and stone foundation. Has two interior brick chimneys in main part of house.

Other Existing Records: "Early Homes of Rhode Island"--Downing, with reference P.323. Quote: "When Samuel Elam, fresh from Leeds, England, rebuilt his uncle's house in Portsmouth 1803-5, he added a four-columned, pedimented portico and small flanking hip-roofed wings on either side, connected to the main building by closed passages. P.324-photograph-exterior. P.325, doorway, now installed in the Metropolitan Museum, New York City.

Handbook of Historical Sites in Rhode Island by Providence Department of Public School, printed in 1936. Reference P.62. Quote: "In its time this country seat was called the most pretentious mansion on the Island....Samuel Elam inherited it from his uncle, Gervais Elam about 1779 and greatly enlarged it at an expense of over \$80,000. He imported trees and shrubs from England.

After it had passed through other hands it was bought in 1837 by Thomas R. Hazard, "Shepard Tom" who wrote there his famous Johnny-cake Papers. It is now in ruins."

  
Philip D. Greer  
District Officer for  
Rhode Island. 1938

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